



Policy Brief: Federal Budget Threatens Nursing Workforce, Community Health, and Access to Care

Date: May 4, 2025

Prepared by: Nurses Shift Change

www.nurseshiftchange.com

Executive Summary

The Trump administration's 2025 budget proposal includes sweeping cuts to healthcare programs and agencies, threatening the backbone of America's health system: nurses. These proposals—now under consideration in Congress—would slash funding for Medicaid and eliminate programs that strengthen the nursing workforce, while gutting primary care and community health resources.

Nurses are the largest segment of the healthcare workforce, and our ability to deliver safe, equitable care depends on targeted investment—not disinvestment.

Key Issues

1. Direct Threats to the Nursing Workforce

- **Elimination of the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR):** The proposed budget would dissolve NINR, silencing a vital voice in federal health research. NINR drives evidence-based nursing practice and innovation in areas like chronic disease, aging, health equity, and caregiving.
- **Termination of the Nurse Faculty Loan Forgiveness Program:** With a nationwide nursing faculty shortage, eliminating this program would further choke the pipeline of new nurses, worsening the projected shortfall of over 500,000 nurses by 2030.
- **Cuts to Workforce Development Programs:** The budget slashes Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs that fund scholarships, advanced training, and rural/underserved placements—critical tools to recruit and retain nurses across the country.
- **Exacerbation of Burnout and Staffing Crises:** With funding cuts rippling through hospitals, community clinics, and home health agencies, nurses will face heavier patient loads, unsafe working conditions, and increased burnout—deepening the healthcare workforce crisis.

2. Cuts to Medicaid and Medicare

- **\$880 Billion in Medicaid Cuts Over 10 Years:** These cuts would slash healthcare for millions of low-income families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities—while shifting financial burdens to states and local providers.



- **Proposed Work Requirements:** By requiring employment verification for Medicaid eligibility, the budget could strip coverage from over 5 million people, especially affecting caregivers, rural residents, and people with chronic illness.
- **Medicare Cuts to Program Administration:** While direct benefits remain untouched for now, reductions in Medicare infrastructure funding would compromise service delivery and delay care for seniors.

3. Undermining Primary Care and Community Health

- **Funding Reductions for Community Health Centers:** These centers deliver frontline care to over 30 million people, especially in rural and underserved areas. Budget reductions would result in clinic closures, reduced hours, and lost access to preventive and chronic care.
- **Cuts to Public Health and Primary Care Research:** Elimination or underfunding of NIH-affiliated institutes will limit innovation in community-based interventions and health equity research.

Call to Action

As nurses, we know that strong communities require strong healthcare systems. We call on Congress to:

1. **Protect and Expand Nursing Workforce Programs.** Restore funding to NINR and Title VIII programs, and preserve the Nurse Faculty Loan Forgiveness Program to strengthen nurse training, education, and retention.
2. **Oppose Cuts to Medicaid and Medicare.** These programs are lifelines—not luxuries—for millions. Gutting them will widen inequities and overwhelm already strained hospitals and clinics.
3. **Defend Community-Based Primary Care.** Sustain funding for health centers and federal research that supports innovation in local care delivery.

Conclusion

The 2025 budget proposal abandons the nation's frontline healthcare workforce and undermines decades of progress in health access and equity. Nurses are sounding the alarm—not just for ourselves, but for the communities we serve. We urge legislators to reject these cuts and invest in a healthier, more just future.

For More Information or to Get Involved:

Visit www.nursesshiftchange.com or contact us at info@nursesshiftchange.com